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ABSTRACT

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Running Head: STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAM IN COUNSELOR EDUCATION

Student Affairs Program in Counselor Education: Past, Present, and Future

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Abstract

Due to the rising need for institutions of higher education to continually assess programs and display accountability, a literature review was performed to tie together, in one document, the historical developments that have brought student affairs training under the umbrella of counselor education. The current status of the student affairs curriculum within counselor education is explored, and implications for further research are offered.



A trend in academia is an increased need for accountability and an understanding of where the curriculum has come and where it is going (Boyer, 1990). In the discipline of counselor education, an apparent link as to how the student affairs curriculum became a part of the overall program of counselor education is missing. A literature review was performed from 1940 to the present to clarify some of the uncertainty, and little information was discovered on the student affairs area and its purpose as a subspecialty within counselor education. The only resource that specifically focused on the student affairs programs within counselor education was the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards. The purpose of the CACREP source was to explain the accreditation standards rather than provide information as to how student affairs fits within counselor education (CACREP 1994; 2001).

For faculty who teach the student affairs classes within departments of counselor education, there is a lack of literature to guide them in training graduate students. Therefore, faculty follow what has been done before or pull pieces together from various venues such as higher education, college student personnel, and other counselor education departments. For the graduate students in the student affairs area, they often feel like the "step-children" in their counselor education program. Some students do not understand why they have to take so many counseling classes for future careers in residence life or admissions. With both faculty and students struggling to understand their role with the student affairs area in counselor education, an investigation into this vagueness is warranted.

There are three main purposes to this article. The first purpose is to tie together the historical developments of the student affairs curriculum and create a clearer understanding as to how it became a part of counselor education. The second purpose is to highlight the recent 2001



CACREP standards and the separation of student affairs into the student affairs program and the college counseling program. The third purpose is to discuss the challenges and implications for the student affairs curriculum in counselor education.

In this article, the term "student affairs" is used to discuss all of the various student affairs programs in departments of counselor education that are accredited by CACREP. The names of the student affairs programs vary for departments based upon their date of accreditation. For example, some departments have student affairs practice, student affairs counseling, college counseling, and student affairs administration. The student affairs areas train graduate students for careers in academic advising, residence life, career counseling, personal counseling, student activities, and the many other divisions of student services that exist on college campuses.

Historical Context

Since there was little information specifically on student affairs in counselor education, this section pieces together the two areas in order to lay the foundation for understanding how student affairs has emerged under the auspices of counselor education. Therefore, the history of counselor education begins this section followed by the history of student affairs and its affiliation with the larger entity of counselor education.

History of Counselor Education

The birth of counselor education programs began in the early 20th century (Hollis, 1997). The majority of the programs at its inception were guidance and school counseling. When the GI Bill was created, the need to increase the training of school counselors was recognized. This led to the National Defense Education Act providing aid to education systems for improving school counselor training (Steinhauser & Bradley, 1983). In 1952, a national organization for counselor education was founded which was the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA),



and one of the founding divisions of APGA was the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) (Hanna & Bemak, 1997; Myers, 1995; Pope, 2000). ACPA was founded in 1924 and served to provide opportunities and professional development to practitioners who were in student personnel services.

The counselor education profession continued to grow which propelled concerns for evaluating the existing and proposed training programs. After decades of debates and discussions, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), a founding division of APGA, created standards for preparing elementary school counselors in 1967. In 1973, ACES developed standards for the preparation of counselors and other personnel services specialists (Steinhauser & Bradley, 1983; Sweeney, 1992). These two historical moments of standardizing the profession signified the beginning of the accreditation journey and the recognition of specialty tracks, such as student affairs, within counselor education.

The demand for evaluation and accreditation continued, and up until 1978, a teaching model was used to assess counselor education programs. Professionals in counselor education recognized the importance of having evaluations that specifically represented counseling instead of teaching. In 1981, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) was born as the official accreditation body for counselor education (Bobby & Kandor, 1992). This accreditation body developed curriculum standards that entailed the following eight core areas of counseling: human growth and development, social and cultural diversity, helping relationships, group work, career development, assessment, research and program evaluation, and professional identity (Association of Counselor Education and Supervision, 1979; Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 1994; 2001).



According to Hollis and Wantz (1986), the counselor education programs in the 1970's and 1980's went through significant structural and curricular changes. Instead of having just two areas of counselor education, which originally were rehabilitation and school counseling, specializations such as student affairs, marriage and family, community agency, and gerontological counseling emerged. The tracks were developed to enhance graduate student training and to prepare counselors for work with specific populations. In 1991, the American Counseling Association (ACA), formerly known as APGA, had its first professionalization committee meeting regarding which specialty areas ACA and CACREP would endorse (Myers, 1995). As a result of that meeting and the recent CACREP (2001) revisions, the following specialty tracks are accredited: career counseling, college counseling, community counseling, gerontological counseling, marital, couple and family counseling and therapy, school counseling, mental health counseling, student affairs, and counselor education and supervision (CACREP, 2001).

History of Student Affairs

"In the earliest colleges in America, nearly everyone had some type of student affairs responsibility" (Carpenter, 1991, p. 254). Universities such as Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary resembled the English system with residential colleges, university officials actively participating in students' moral development, and universities playing a parental role in the students' lives (Carpenter, 1991). In the 19th century, professors began to train in Germany and were returning to the United States expressing that student behaviors outside of the classroom were no longer the faculties' concern. (Komives & Woodard, 1996; Lloyd-Jones, 1954; Rudolph, 1990). The faculties' relinquishing of the responsibility of shaping student behaviors created an opportunity for the profession of student affairs to formally emerge. The first Dean of Student



Relations was appointed at Harvard in 1870. The Harvard Dean of Students acquired the disciplinarian responsibilities that were formerly handled by the president. In 1891, the role of counseling students was added to this dean's position (Yarris, 1988). Harvard led the way by creating formal student affairs positions and other universities followed by designating university officials to work with students on disciplinarian and counseling concerns (Komives & Woodard, 1996; Lloyd-Jones, 1954).

As higher education grew into the 20th century, more women were attending college and extracurricular activities were on the rise. In addition, services being offered to students, such as vocational counseling, mental health hygiene, and psychological testing, provided a natural progression into developing student affairs as an official pillar in higher education (Lloyd-Jones, 1954). The professionals in student affairs were institutional leaders who had to possess both administrative and counseling skills (Mueller, 1961; Williamson, 1961). Ultimately, these new professionals in higher education were expected to foster an environment in which students could grow and develop. This growth occurred due to daily contact with the students by these new deans of men and women (Mueller, 1961; Williamson, 1961).

The professionals who were becoming deans of women and men did not possess formal student development training or hold degrees related to their functions. Therefore, in the early 1900's, Columbia University's Teacher's College created the first formal training program for student affairs professionals. Columbia's program awarded a Master of Arts degree called the "Advisor of Women" (Komives & Woodard, 1996; Lloyd-Jones, 1954).

History of Student Affairs as a Component of Counselor Education

Again, one purpose of this article is to solidify an understanding of how student affairs became a part of counselor education, and as it can already be determined, there was significant



overlap as each entity developed throughout history. From the Dean of Students at Harvard adding a counseling role to his disciplinarian responsibilities to CACREP accrediting the student affairs specialty track, the two entities clearly influenced and complemented each other.

As access to higher education increased in the mid-1900s, the diversity of students and issues that accompanied them propelled a need for counseling and developmental lenses in providing student services. According to Williamson (1961), the student affairs professionals in the mid-1900s needed to understand late adolescent and early adult development. In addition, students' responsibilities coupled with academic and social freedom warranted an understanding of college student development. The student affairs professionals were not only expected to develop and implement policy but to also create a co-curriculum that fostered student autonomy, emotional stability, and social growth.

In 1963, ACPA held a commission meeting in Boston to assess the needs of college students. In this meeting, a discussion arose on how to make the student personnel graduate programs reflect the current issues facing the undergraduate population (Klopf, 1966). The element of counseling dominated the conversation and signified a critical moment when counseling became more closely tied to student personnel work. The establishment of Veteran's Administration Guidance Centers was also taking place in the mid-1900s. These centers were created to help veterans adjust to and succeed in higher education (Dean & Meadows, 1995; Klopf, 1966). These preliminary counseling and guidance centers proved to be successful and led to other universities across the nation creating counseling centers. These centers were typically staffed with professionals trained in clinical or counseling psychology. University officials began to express concerns that the psychology-based centers were not meeting the needs of students with adjustment issues and developmental concerns (Klopf, 1966). This rising concern fueled the



creation of counseling based graduate training programs that specifically prepared professionals to work with college students.

Over the past thirty years, the student population in higher education has diversified. Over half of the college students are women, more than 20% are from under-represented groups, and there has been a rise in students with disabilities (Garland & Grace, 1993). Students are also facing issues such as substance abuse, family problems, relationship struggles, eating disorders. and identity development to name just a few (Archer, 1991; Winston & Miller, 1991). The field of student affairs began as a way to provide student services when the faculty began to follow the German model of higher education. Student affairs professionals have progressed from being disciplinarians to coordinators to educators and now integrators of the many roles through history (Garland & Grace, 1993). In this integrationist role, the purpose of student affairs is to help develop the whole student. Professionals are encouraged to use human development as a basis for helping students grow physically, socially, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually (Garland & Grace, 1993). The student affairs professionals are now expected to be service providers, student advocates, programmers, and counselors (Winston & Miller, 1991). According to Archer (1991), student affairs professionals must possess basic counseling and listening skills in order to adequately meet the students' needs.

It is important to note here that the above information needs to be balanced with giving recognition to conflicts that grew between the counseling and student affairs field in the 1980's. In 1989, the American Association of Counseling and Development (AACD), formerly APGA, changed its name for the third time and became the American Counseling Association (ACA). With the new name emphasizing counseling and deleting the developmental title, members of ACA who were from a student affairs paradigm expressed concern that ACA was becoming too



counseling focused. Therefore, in 1992, ACPA split from ACA and both organizations became independent professional associations (Pope, 2000). So even as complementary as the two professions appeared in their historical developments, differences have also been an element of their growth.

CACREP and Student Affairs

As previously mentioned, there has been little research conducted on student affairs within counselor education. The one area where information can be found on student affairs as a part of counselor education is in the CACREP standards. CACREP covered more accreditation information than clarification as to how student affairs grew to be a part of counselor education (Bobby & Kandor, 1995). In order to gain further information on the standards, email correspondences with C. L. Bobby (personal communication, November 15, 2001) at CACREP took place. According to Bobby (2001), the student affairs area was accredited by the 1988, 1994, and 2001 CACREP standards. In the 1988 standards, the student affairs curriculum was called student affairs practice in higher education. Students who chose this curriculum then had to further sub-specialize by indicating a counseling, developmental, or an administrative emphasis.

When the CACREP standards were revised in 1994, the student affairs curriculum was still called student affairs practice in higher education, but the names of the sub-specialty areas changed and the three tracks from 1988 were collapsed into two. Therefore graduate students chose either the college counseling or the professional practice emphasis (CACREP, 1994).

When the 2001 revisions of the CACREP standards were released, the nature and name of the student affairs programs changed even more. Before the student affairs area had an umbrella title called student affairs practice in higher education and then had the college



counseling or professional practice sub-areas. In 2001, the umbrella titled was deleted and the two sub-specialties stood independently. Now, the college counseling program and the student affairs program are two separate areas (CACREP, 2001). According to Bobby (2001), the college counseling track is set apart from the student affairs track because of the necessity to acquire knowledge and skills in biopsychosocial assessment and case conceptualization for college students.

To help illustrate the difference between student affairs and college counseling, the following information highlights the main curricular areas:

In the college counseling program, the four areas emphasized for curricular experiences were: a) foundations of college counseling; b) contextual dimensions of college counseling; c) knowledge and skills required for college counselors; and d) clinical instruction (CACREP, 2001).

The standards for the student affairs program emphasized: a) foundations of student affairs; b) contextual dimensions of student affairs; c) knowledge and skills for the practice of student affairs professionals; and d) clinical instruction (CACREP, 2001). Both programs required a clinical component in the form of a 600 hour internship. The internship sites needed to be consistent with whether the student is in the student affairs or counseling focus.

Current Curriculum Challenges and Implications

Sexton (1998) claimed that the counselor education curriculum is in the spotlight due to an increased need for accountability. The climate within counselor education changes on a daily basis and credible research is imperative to guide those practices that need to be preserved, added, and modified. Counselor education has been criticized for not developing systematic



methods for evaluating the models of practice in the profession and the reasons underlying them (Sexton, 1998). Engles (1991) purported that there are no studies indicating that CACREP graduates are more effective than those who graduate from a non-CACREP program. The concerns of accountability directly influence the practices for preparing up and coming student affairs professionals trained in counselor education programs.

One implication out of this literature review is that counselor education programs and accreditation bodies need to develop studies that can support the training approaches for student affairs and college counseling programs. With higher education facing more stringent budget allocations and demands for producing results, investigations into the effectiveness of training programs is essential to secure a place in academia. A logical starting point to this research would be to study employers of CACREP student affairs graduates to see how well the students were prepared for their first professional position after graduate school. This type of research would also invite employers to provide feedback on areas that graduate programs need to modify or add.

Carpenter (1980) found that while in graduate school, student affairs professionals could not pinpoint why they had chosen to study student affairs and were not sure how they chose their program of study. With that in mind, graduate students in counselor education often enter the program because of the title of student affairs or student development and are unaware of the heavy emphasis in counseling. A second implication is to critically analyze the placement of student affairs training under an umbrella of counselor education. There is no doubt that student affairs professionals need to be trained in counseling skills (Archer, 1991; Garland & Grace, 1993; Winston & Miller, 1991), but the structure of the curriculum needs to be evaluated. To be effective, should student affairs professionals be in a program that is under counselor education



or should the counseling component be under the umbrella of student affairs education? The split of ACPA from ACA in 1992 indicates one bias that leans more towards having less of a counseling emphasis with a more balanced focus between administration and counseling with student affairs.

Conclusion

The marriage between counseling and student affairs is one that has deep historical roots in higher education yet a formal trail of this marriage is unclear. As more and more students are entering college with developmental issues, the need for student affairs professionals to be skilled as both administrators and counselors continues to rise (Yarris, 1988). Student affairs professionals who are out in the field working often mention how they now see the basis for having a counseling component to their training. Now, the challenge is how do we make the connection while in graduate school for students to see how their counseling and student affairs classes are intertwined and crucial to their development as student affairs professionals. The lack of evaluation and research on the effectiveness of this program in counselor education is the missing link to creating an appropriate place for student affairs in counselor education.



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